

MESSAGE NO. 1

OF

HIS EXCELLENCY M. L. BONHAM,

TO

THE LEGISLATURE

AT THE

REGULAR SESSION OF NOVEMBER, 1863.

COLUMBIA, S. C.
CHARLES P. PELHAM, STATE PRINTER.

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MESSAGE NO. 1.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
Columbia, November 23, 1863.

Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives :

Since your last annual meeting, the enemy has obtained possession of Port Hudson, Vicksburg, Chattanooga and Morris Island, not, however, without paying dearly for his possessions; and a second time have our troops evacuated Pennsylvania and Maryland, though, not defeated. There is in this, no cause for despondency. He is this day relatively weaker than he was before these events, his armies being widely separated, and further from their bases of supplies, whilst the Confederacy is relatively stronger, our armies possessing the facilities for more rapid concentration by interior lines, and being nearer their bases of supplies. The great battle of Chickamauga, in which some of Carolina's noblest sons have fallen, has illustrated the truth of this proposition. Beyond the points obtained, he has made no real progress towards the accomplishment of his purpose,—the subjugation of the South. Our harvests have been bountiful, our country healthy, and our people have been rendered, if possible, more united and resolved, by the vandalism of our foes. The siege of Charleston, now far advanced into its fifth month, conducted with a power and range of metal and destructiveness of projectiles, hitherto unknown in warfare, and a malignity that respects neither sex, age or condition, has shown to our enemies that they will probably never place their unhallowed feet upon the soil of that brave old city; but, if they do, it will be only when they have reduced it to a heap of ruins. Sumter, held with a gallantry and a tenacity which will immortalize its noble defenders, is now in ruins, but is yet a giant in its powers of resistance. To the west of the Mississippi, our troops have gained important advantages. In Tennessee, the enemy's forces are besieged in Chattanooga and driven from Knoxville, and the army of the Potomac stands ready to give him another Fredericksburg reception. It behooves us, however, not to relax our efforts. Untiring energy and perseverance are essential to

success. A bitter and wily foe watches our every movement, prepared to take every advantage. Our people have counted the cost, and have determined upon independence or annihilation; it is *ours* to leave nothing undone to secure the object of this revolution. Never was the remark more applicable, that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance. The State Legislatures have no unimportant part to play in this great drama. They can aid the Confederate government, by assisting in clothing the troops, in repelling the raids of our enemies, and in feeding the families of our soldiers in arms. In all measures which you, in your wisdom, may adopt, looking to the successful issue of this great struggle, you may, gentlemen, rely upon my hearty co-operation.

The supplying of slave labor for coast defences has proved perplexing. Our energetic State Agent, whose report is herewith transmitted, has done all in his power to enforce your acts on this subject. But the system has not furnished all the labor which the pressing emergencies at Charleston required. The Confederate General felt the necessity of impressing, in September last, additional labor to secure the safety of the city. This action, I did not, under the circumstances, hesitate to approve. It would seem that no system imposing penalties, is likely to secure equality and success. The patriotic send their slaves; others will pay, if the fine is not too heavy, or take the chances of escape through the Courts. Much complaint is made of the mismanagement and treatment of the negroes; of their detention in violation of the contract and the law, and that so many citizens furnish no labor at all. The first complaint, I am sorry to believe, there is foundation for; but the remedy for the evil is difficult, and must necessarily rest with the Confederate authorities. The second, I have been given to understand, arises from the inability of the State authorities to replace the labor at the end of the month. The third, is the result of a radical defect in the system itself. If labor is still to be furnished, and I have no intimation that it will not be needed, (so long as the coast is invaded, and there is need of it, it ought to be furnished,) the plan which will secure the greatest equality, in my judgment, is to authorize the Governor or State Agent, or the Confederate General commanding the department, if it is preferred, to impress, through the Commissioners of Roads, for two months' service, the equal proportion of every slaveholder, owning more than one road hand. My acquaintance, for some years past, with the organization of these Boards, leads me to believe that they would fairly and impartially discharge the duty, and furnish the labor promptly. An extension of the time of service is recommended, to lessen the expenses of transportation, and because every change requires a new organization, which takes, I learn, the better part of the first week. Besides, it is not

the time the hands are kept, of which planters complain, if they are advertized of it; it is their detention, contrary to the understanding and their previous arrangements. .

Owing to the disorganization of the State militia, by the enforcement of the Conscript Acts of Congress up to the age of forty-five, it will require much time to reorganize it, so as to make it at all effective. Upon this subject, I ask your attention to the Report of the Adjutant and Inspector General. In the present condition of things, a permanent force, taken by volunteering or by draft, proportionally from each military division of the State, would be much more effective. The militia, for protection against raids, cannot be brought so promptly into the field; would not be so effective; and suddenly called out by regiments, would take the entire agricultural white labor of the particular regiments from home, perhaps at harvest, perhaps at seed-time. On this subject, I beg leave to embody an extract from the recent message of the patriotic Executive of Georgia.

Speaking of his two Regiments of State troops, their protecting the rear of General Bragg's army since he has been near Chattanooga, and their importance in time of war, he says: "Had the State not been able to protect his rear, the General must have sent part of his own army to do that duty, which would have weakened his force, and made his success more doubtful. * * * * In case of a raid into this State, this force would be of great service in the protection of public and private property, and in repelling the aggressors. No State in the Confederacy should be without such a force during the continuance of the war, as emergencies must frequently arise which make it indispensably necessary that the State have at her command a force sufficient to suppress slave insurrections, repel incursions of the enemy, or meet other sudden exigencies. I notice that the Governor of South Carolina has lately convened the Legislature, and recommended the organization of a similar force in that gallant State."

The cost of such a body of troops may be objected to. If two regiments are too much, let one be raised, to be put in the field when needed, and wholly, or partially furloughed, when not needed. This is no time to count the cost of maintaining a small force to protect the State against raids, our women and children from insult, our hearth-stones from desecration. With but two companies of mounted troops (the Combahee Rangers were disbanded in July last,) I was enabled with one, Rogers' company, to guard in part, the eastern coast of the State, and with the other, Boykin's, materially to assist the Confederate Government in arresting deserters, which delicate duty has been most satisfactorily performed. I have also been enabled recently, at the request of Governor Vance, to send one company, Captain Boykin's, into North Carolina, where it has rendered most efficient

services, as will be seen by reference to the report of the Captain, and General Vance's order returning them to their own State, copies of which are herewith transmitted. His command engaged and repulsed a force larger than his own, Captain Boykin having two men wounded, one probably mortally.

I herewith transmit a copy of the able and satisfactory Report of Major Niernsee, State Engineer, upon the obstruction of the Santee, and a battery at Taber's Point, St. Matthew's Parish, Orangeburg District, together with a letter from General Beauregard in relation thereto.

Accompanying this Message, is a report of the Commissary General, showing the progress made in suppressing undue distillation in the State, and explaining the inability of the State to furnish as yet, whiskey for medicinal purposes. Your law prohibiting undue distillation has contributed largely towards keeping down the price of breadstuffs, particularly Indian corn. If the Confederate Government would receive its tithe, and postpone impressments for the present, (holders will not destroy the supplies, nor can they conceal them,) I believe the breadstuffs in the country are amply sufficient for the people and the army.

The question of conflict between the State and Confederate Exemption Acts has been submitted to the courts, and I am just informed that the decision of the Circuit Court is, "that neither the Ordinance nor the Act amendatory of it, contemplated exemption from any service besides Militia service in the State, and so neither is in conflict with the Conscription laws." As I said in my message of September last, I think it is our true policy to amend our exemption laws, so as to make them conform as nearly as practicable to those of the Confederate government. This may be done without yielding the right of the State to exempt such portion of her population as she may choose, and when she may choose, for police and other purposes. If the Confederate Government will put into the field the most of the able bodied men between eighteen and forty-five, now occupied as Quartermasters and Commissaries' Purchasing Agents, Enrolling Officers and Impressing Agents, and in other similar positions, the great mass of whose places can be as well, in many, and in some instances, better filled by disabled soldiers, and the State governments will conform their's to the Confederate Exemption Acts, the Confederate Government can command a force that will drive beyond our borders all the armies the Abolition government can congregate for the further prosecution of this unholy war. Your attention is invited to the views of the Adjutant and Inspector General upon this and other subjects referred to, in his report accompanying this Message.

I also ask your attention to the following exemption clause in our own law: "The officers, and as many employees of each Railroad Company as

the President or Superintendent may certify to be necessary to the efficient conduct of its business ; *Provided*, that it is also certified that the duty of said employees cannot be discharged by slaves." I do not know that these officers have abused this trust. Such power should not be lodged with any one who is not directly connected with the administration of the government. The final decision should be left with the Executive, or the Adjutant General.

The permission of substitutions is suited to a war in which a small proportion of the arms-bearing population is required for the field,—not to a war which may sooner or later require every man, without reference to age, to shoulder his musket; and especially is it unsuited to a conscription system which purports to take all able-bodied men between given ages. You have wisely declared those having substitutes in Confederate service still liable to State service. The time, I suggest, has arrived when all laws, whether State or Confederate, allowing substitution, should be repealed. They operate in favor of a class, than whom none have a deeper interest in the success of the cause.

The State owes no higher obligation growing out of this war than to protect every soldier's family against want; and to effect this, it is the duty of the Legislature to increase the appropriation to be distributed by the Soldiers' Boards of Relief to any amount requisite; and if necessary, to raise the taxes for that purpose. And these taxes should, at this time, be levied upon incomes.

Of the fund appropriated for the Military defence of the State, less than one half has been expended. The six months' State troops having gone into Confederate service, and the exigencies, though threatening, not having required the calling out of the militia, the expenditures, have been far less than was anticipated. I have directed the Auditor to obtain estimates from all the Departments for the next year, which I will send in as soon as completed.

Upon this, the Quartermaster General's Department, and other subjects reported upon, I call your attention to the full and satisfactory report of the State Auditor. The arduous duties of this officer have been faithfully and ably performed. Under, as I think, a mistaken view, much of his salary has been expended for what I can scarcely suppose it was the expectation of the Legislature it would be. Such an officer at this time, is indispensable, but his labors are too great for one person. One assistant, and for a short period two, have been found necessary for the accomplishment of the work. I recommend that an assistant be allowed, with a competent salary.

To the reports of the Auditor and the Commissary General, I refer you, for information as to what has been done in procuring and distributing wool

and cotton cards, and the procurement of card-making machines. It is much to be regretted that these articles could not have been sooner procured. But I have no reason to doubt that the agents employed to procure them, accomplished all that was practicable. Learning from General James Jones, Quartermaster General, to whose superintendence I have committed the card-making machines, that one machinest can manage ten with ease, I ordered one to be made here, (not yet completed,) and have purchased nine others, obtained from abroad, six of which have just arrived. The number of wool and cotton cards received will relieve much the wants of soldiers' families, and other needy families; and the card-making machines, I trust, will enable me before a great while to materially reduce the price. The mode of distributing them, according to representation, is not, under existing circumstances, just. It would be far more so, to distribute them according to the actual wants of all the districts, to be determined by the present population.

I transmit herewith copies of communications from some eminently practical citizens, upon the subject of Government ships for procuring such machinery and supplies, as the State may need for her own use, or that of her soldiers in Confederate service. The Confederate Government cannot, at all times, so promptly as they may wish, furnish such things as the army may need; and by adopting one or both of the schemes suggested, the State will be in a condition to procure for herself, or furnish to the troops such articles at much less cost than now.

The Confederate Government has expressed a willingness to take off the hands of the State, the Saltpetre plantation, and her interest in the Lead mine, at cost and charges; but not the State works. I did not deem it advisable to transfer the least important and expensive part of the Public works, retaining the others. The working of the Lead mine, I recommend to be abandoned, as it cannot, according to the Report of Dr. LeConte, herewith communicated, be made profitable. The Saltpetre plantation, it is believed, can be made to pay well, and is a very interesting experiment. The advantages of the State works do not appear to be, so far, commensurate with the expenditures. It is believed, however, that they will in future be profitable, if the expenses of procuring coal and coke, and transporting iron, do not prevent it. It is a grave question for your consideration, in the present state of the country, whether it would not be better now, to change the locality of the works, placing them at Columbia, on the canal, or near the iron mines, at some place where the machinery may be run by water. And here I recommend to your consideration the question of how far it may not be desirable for the State to do something towards establishing more direct communication with the Deep River coal mines. If these diffi-

culties could be overcome, the information I have received on a recent visit to the works, from the intelligent Superintendent and the heads of the different departments, satisfies me they will be profitable. It is a matter of great importance to the State to have it, in future, in her own power to manufacture the implements of war which she may need.

In accordance with your resolution, I contracted for the manufacture of one thousand Morse's carbines. A part of them have been completed, and I regard them the best Cavalry weapon in use. The compensation to Col. Morse has not been determined upon, and I recommend this matter to your consideration, as something more than the mere value of the article manufactured, it may be thought proper to allow.

Five of George's Revolving cannon have been constructed, under your resolution, and inspected and approved by the Ordnance officer of the State, whose report, together with reports furnished by General Hampton and Captain Thomas, as to the utility of the arm, are herewith communicated. The remaining two will be completed, by Captain George, at an early day. In order to have them fully tested, I sent one to General Beauregard, and another I delivered to General Hampton, to be carried to Virginia, where it can be tested in the field. He proposed to replace it with another which he has ordered to be constructed. Two others, I have, within the last few days, sent to General Beauregard, at his request, he thinking them useful at Charleston. The fifth is at the Arsenal for the inspection of the Military Committees. I refer you, for further information on these subjects, to the report of the Ordnance officer, herewith communicated.

I attended, in July last, the annual examination of the Deaf and Dumb, at the Cedar Springs Asylum. I commend this Institution to the fostering care of the State. No one who has not attended the examinations can form any adequate estimate of the happiness imparted to the unfortunate pupils of the school by their education.

The Citadel and Arsenal Academies are in a flourishing condition, and at this juncture, are the most suitable institutions for training the youths of our State. I commend them earnestly to your care and encouragement.

I transmit copies of a communication from Hon. James A. Seddon, Secretary of War, acknowledging the receipt of your resolution of September, in reference to impressments. There have certainly been many irregularities on the part of government officials, in the execution of the law; but it is hoped the orders of the War Department, recently published, may prevent them in future.

In compliance with the resolutions of your Houses, at your last session, upon the subject of furloughs to the six months' troops, for the purpose of gathering their crops and sowing grain, and also as to placing troops near

the passes of the mountains, I communicated both with the Secretary of War and the Commanding General of this department. Their replies are herewith transmitted. Subsequently, upon representations from Asheville, and also from the citizens of Greenville, that the danger of a raid through Asheville into the upper districts of this State was imminent, the Commanding General sent to the mountains one regiment of State troops and a battery of light artillery.

In accordance with your resolution, I accepted the offer of Mr. William Gregg, President of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, to deliver to the State, for distribution through the different Boards of Relief for families of soldiers, ten thousand yards of Graniteville cloths per week. I notified him of my acceptance of his proposition, and have received several thousand yards, and have directed the distribution according to your resolution. Since that time, I have received from Mr. Gregg, a proposition to change the terms of his offer, but did not feel warranted in acceding to it. I transmit copies of his letter and of my reply.

I earnestly recommend an increase of the salaries of all public officers whose salaries are not limited by the Constitution. The high price of provisions and rents, renders it utterly impossible for them to support themselves with their present salaries, especially those whose duties require them to live in Columbia. I enclose herewith copies of a communication addressed to me upon this subject.

I transmit, also, a copy of a communication from Hon. Marshall McCue, which he desires should reach you through me, upon the subject of clothing for our army, together with a pamphlet containing his speech in the House of Delegates and much valuable statistical information.

I transmit, also, copies of a memorial and letters of Mr. B. J. Sage, upon the subject of a Volunteer Navy, under the Act of Congress. I recommend this subject to the most favorable consideration of the Legislature. The recent action of the British and French governments, renders it more than ever desirable, that the States, themselves, should take some steps towards furnishing what has been so long needed to bring the war to a speedy and successful termination.

In accordance with your resolutions of January 24, 1863, I established the Richmond Agency, for the assistance of South Carolina soldiers. I appointed Colonel E. P. Jones, of Greenville, agent, and authorized him to employ two assistants, requiring him to make periodical returns. I have every reason to be satisfied with the manner in which he has performed his duties, and have every assurance that the agency has contributed greatly to the comfort and relief of our soldiers with an inconsiderable outlay of money. Copies of his annual report are herewith submitted.

I transmit, also, a communication from a Committee of the House of Delegates of Virginia, upon the all-important question of the currency. It is gratifying to know that in your bodies are to be found some of the ablest financiers of the country, and I trust that their combined wisdom may suggest some means of improving its condition.

I herewith communicate copies of certain resolutions of the North Carolina Legislature upon the subject of loyalty, enclosed me by the Governor of that State, to be laid before your bodies.

I transmit also the first battle-flag of the 13th South Carolina Volunteers, with the correspondence between Lieutenant Colonel Brockman, commanding, and myself. It was the flag borne by the regiment under the lead of its gallant Colonel, Edwards, who gave up his life in defence of that flag and his country's honor. It should be preserved as one of the proud memorials of the gallantry of Carolina's sons.

I recommend an amendment of the sixth section of "The Act to enable citizens of the State who are engaged in military service to exercise the rights of suffrage," ratified on the 6th day of February, 1863, so as to require the polls to be opened in the army on a day so long previous to the day fixed for the election, as to secure ample time for the transmission of the result to the district managers before the day for declaring the election.

The office of Paymaster General, should be abolished, and the duties assigned to the Quartermaster General's department. The duties of these two departments are consolidated in the Confederate government, and it is found to work well.

All joint resolutions should be engrossed and filed in the Secretary of State's office, and be published with the Acts. They are so disposed of under the Federal as well as the Confederate governments, and I incline to think, some of the State governments. Having the force of law, they should be as accessible to the public as the Acts of Assembly themselves. Moreover, as they often impose duties upon the Executive, it is important that he should have ready access to them immediately upon the adjournment of the Legislature.

I enclose a joint resolution of the Legislature of Georgia, just received, setting apart the 10th day of December next, as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, and requesting the Congress of the Confederate States, the Legislatures of the different States, the Army and Navy, and all the people, to unite with them in its observance. I recommend the adoption of a resolution of concurrence, with a request to all the good citizens of this State, to unite in the observance of that day.

Upon your deliberations, I invoke the blessings of the Almighty.

M. L. BONHAM.

